

REMARKS/ARGUMENT

In the most recent Office Action, claims 1-153 were examined. Claims 1-12, 45-63 and 152-153 are withdrawn from consideration. Claims 38 and 42-44 are allowed. Claims 19-20, 32-33, 35-37, 64-65, 117-126 and 132-146 are objected to. Claims 13-18, 21-31, 34, 39-41, 66-116, 127-131 and 147-151 are rejected. Claims 13-44 and 64-151 are amended. Accordingly, claims 1-153 are pending in the application. No new matter is added.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough search and consideration of the present application, and respond to the comments in the Office Action as follows.

Drawings

The drawings are objected to for having mis-labeled figure numbers. Applicants have corrected the drawings and submit herewith new formal drawings of the corrected figures for entry in the application. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Abstract

The Office Action states that the abstract of the disclosure is objected to because it should recite only the elected invention. Applicants submit herewith a revised abstract for consideration in the application. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to the abstract is respectfully requested.

Specification

The Office Action states that the specification is objected to for informalities in the Brief Description of the Drawings. Applicants have corrected the Brief Description of the Drawings in the specification to overcome the objection. Applicants respectfully request that the objection accordingly be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Conclusion

Applicants respectfully believe that the present response addresses all issues raised in the most recent Office Action. Applicants further believe that, in view of the above discussion and amendments, the application is now in condition for allowance, and earnestly solicits notice to that effect. If it is believed that an interview would contribute to progress in the application, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned counsel at the number provided below.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on January 30, 2004

Respectfully submitted,

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Signature

January 30, 2004

Date of Signature

BJK:gl